

**E. BARRETT PRETTYMAN UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
ANNEX AND RESTORATION**

333 Constitution Avenue, NW,
Washington, D.C.

Report to the General Services Administration

October 10, 2001

Abstract

The General Services Administration has submitted final site and building plans for the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse annex and restoration project. The proposed 350,000 square feet six-story annex is expected to support the court for the next 30 years. Designed by Michael Graves, the annex, that incorporates a cylindrical rotunda that marks the intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, represents a significant architectural and symbolic addition to the Nation's ceremonial "Main Street."

Subsequent to the Commission's review and approval of the preliminary site and building plans at its meeting of June 3, 1999, the project went on-the-shelf awaiting funding. Preliminary plans were, for all intents and purposes, representative of the final design of the exterior of the building. With the exception of refinement of the Third Street entrance and the preparation of final landscape plans, very little has changed from that which the Commission approved at preliminary review.

Authority

D.C. Code, sec. 5-432, and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, as amended.

Commission Action

The Commission:

- **Approves** the final site and building plans for the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse annex and restoration, 333 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.21(38.00) – 40594, Sheets No. 1 – 11, except for the bollards, including the illuminated bollards.
- **Delegates** review and approval of the proposed sculpture on the face of the vaults to the Executive Director.

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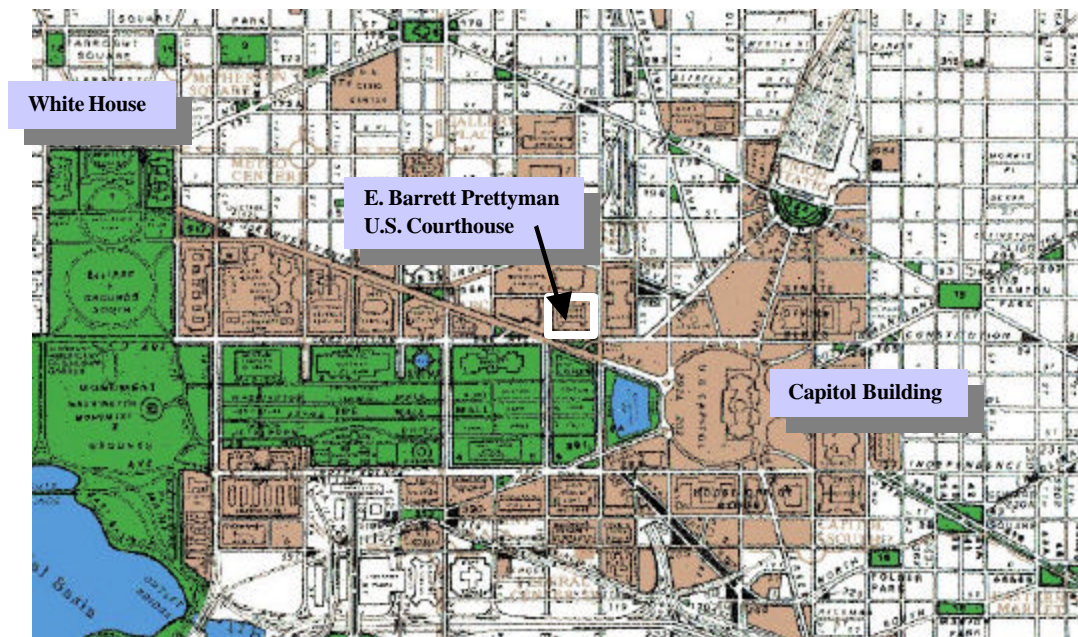
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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted final site and building plans for the annex to and restoration of the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse at 333 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington D.C.



E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse's prominent location on Pennsylvania Avenue

Site Context

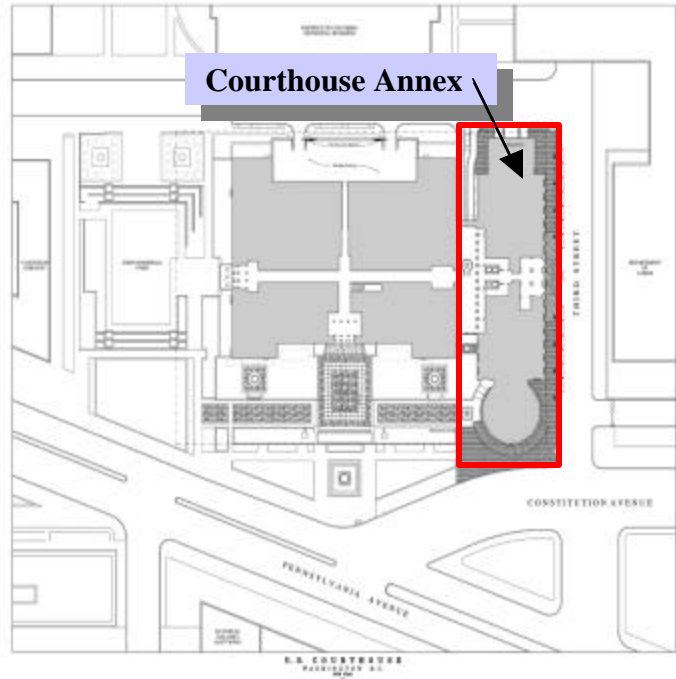
- The courthouse is located on the north side of the intersection of Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues. It is bounded on the east by Third Street, on the north by C Street, and on the west by John Marshall Park.
- The proposed annex will abut the east façade of the existing courthouse and occupy the courthouse's current surface parking lot. This parcel has a frontage of approximately 136 feet on Constitution Avenue.

Site Design

- The project includes the redesign and landscaping of the existing plaza and open space to the south of the courthouse. The current access drive and drop-off lane will be removed and replaced with a landscaped pedestrian plaza that reinforces the formal approach to the courthouse.

Building Program

- The program for the annex includes approximately 350,000 gross square feet of new development and is expected to support the 30-year functional needs of the court.
 - Two below-grade floors accommodate parking for the court, secure prisoner circulation and mechanical and electrical equipment spaces.
 - The main entrance to the annex is at Third Street and the ground floor contains the public lobby and connecting atrium linking the annex to the existing courthouse building.
 - The upper floors house the courtrooms, judges' chambers and support offices that serve the U.S. District Court, the District and Appellate Courts, and the Court of Appeals.
 - The loading dock and parking entrances are accessed from C Street.



Building Massing

- The annex is visually separated from the existing courthouse building out of respect for its symmetrical design and the central location of the main ceremonial south entrance. An atrium accommodates the necessary functional links between the old and new structures while providing a large public room open to the new courtroom galleries. The atrium is set back from the annex's primary north and south elevations to further define the composition and to help retain the integrity of the existing courthouse.
- The annex consists of a rectangular building flanked on the south by a cylindrical-shaped rotunda and on the north by a square-shaped office pavilion. Massing reflects the plan's organization.
 - Four distinct bays define the Third Street facade and signify the locations of the courtrooms.
 - The rotunda is located in the existing open space immediately to the north of Constitution Avenue and defines this pivotal location on Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues. Its scale, emphasized by the double height windows and stylized stepped roof, is commensurate with that of other buildings on the avenues and its prominent location in the Monumental Core of the Nation's Capital.

Roof Forms

The roof forms reflect the massing of the annex.

- The rotunda has a stylized, stepped roof.
- The penthouse of the main building has a vaulted roof and four barrel vaults. These vaults are perpendicular to the main axis of the building, reflect the location of the courtrooms, and highlight the Third Street bays.
- The north pavilion has a flat roof.

Building Materials

- The first floor of the annex is to be clad in Indiana limestone to match the existing courthouse. Cream colored architectural precast concrete is used above the first floor.
- The window surrounds and columns are detailed in white veined Crystal Danby (Vermont) marble.
- A red cast stone or architectural precast is incorporated in the curtain walls and recessed areas of the building.
- Glazing is clear laminated insulating glass in painted aluminum frames.
- The entrance doors and frames are nickel-silver.
- The exterior façade of the atrium is sheathed in painted metal and glass.
- The barrel-vaulted roof is clad in mill-finished aluminum.
- The roof of the rotunda is cream colored architectural precast concrete.



*Rendering of the proposed Courthouse Annex
As viewed from the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Third Street, NW
(As approved at the Commission's preliminary review)*

CONSULTATION WITH GSA

Subsequent to the Commission's review and approval of the conceptual plans for the annex, NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation staff met on several occasions with GSA and their design team to review the evolution of the design.

Consultation achieved the following:

- Clarification of the footprint and shape of the rotunda.
- Improvement of the relationship between the rotunda and the main mass of the annex, particularly at the intersection of the roof forms.
- Resolution of the shape of the main building vaults and the form of the rotunda roof including an approximate five-foot increase in height and varied pitch.
- The addition of a plinth and incorporation of the Constitution Avenue and Third Street sidewalks to better transition the rotunda to grade and to the Avenues.
- Incorporation of required site security measures as streetscape elements.
- Revision of the design of the proportions and locations of the rotunda windows and agreement on a preferred design.
- Incorporation of elements proposed to enhance the identity of the Third Street entrance, e.g. the name of the building, a canopy, flags, special lighting, paving, bollards, etc.
- Concurrence on modifications to the design of the atrium incorporating additional glazing and the addition of painted metal throughout.
- Revisions to the C Street elevation and agreement on the design of the three-story pedestrian bridge.



U.S. Courthouse Annex looking east on Pennsylvania Avenue

EVALUATION

Located at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, the courthouse annex presents a significant architectural and symbolic addition to the Nation's ceremonial "Main Street." The annex and, in particular the rotunda, will be a significant addition to the Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenue view corridors. The courthouse will be one of the most prominent buildings on these avenues and within the Monumental Core of Washington.

Evaluation presented in the preliminary site and building plans EDR is summarized as follows:

Preliminary Site and Building Plans:

At its meeting on June 3, 1999 the Commission approved preliminary site and building plans for the courthouse annex and restoration. The Commission complemented the General Services Administration (GSA) and its architects (Graves/SHG) for their consultation with staff and for successfully addressing the previous concerns.

The Site Plan:

The annex helps define the plaza to the south of the existing courthouse. The proposed redesign of the plaza incorporates the major elements of the current historic plaza (paved areas, planting beds, fountains, statuary and flag poles) and adds clarity and functionality through the expansion and design of new paving patterns.

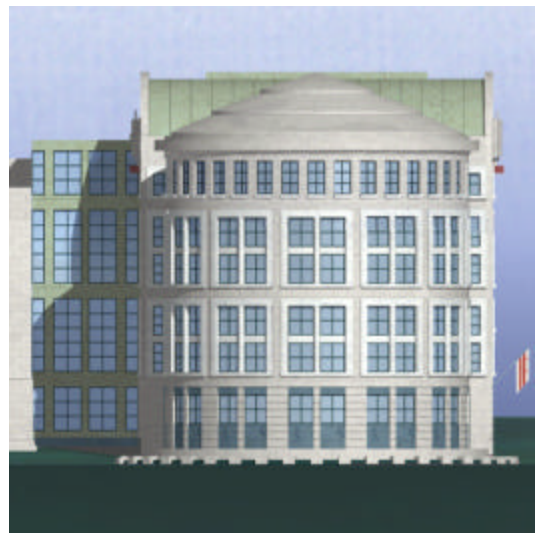
The design of the Third Street streetscape is consistent with the District of Columbia Department of Public Works (DC-DPW) streetscape standards and the Interagency Initiative for National Mall Road Improvement Programs Streetscape Manual. Streetscape design incorporates all of the physical perimeter site security that is required to meet GSA's security criteria for this project. The design also contributes to the identity of the Third Street Entrance.

The Rotunda:

The design of the rotunda, including the stylized, stepped roof, results in a scale, proportion and detailing that is appropriate to the future landmark status of this element of the building.

The Third Street Elevation:

The Third Street elevation has the potential to become the most recognized facade of the courthouse. The Third Street entrance is identified through the addition of the name of the building, a canopy, flags, an increase in the amount of glazing, and the use of color and lighting. Streetscape design varies the tree spacing and incorporates special paving and bollards to mark the entrance. Curbside parking will be restricted in this area.



South Elevation of the Rotunda



Third Street Elevation

Materials and Colors:

The materials and colors proposed for use in the annex appear appropriate to this addition to the courthouse and to its prominent location. The application of these materials and colors is significant in reinforcing the overall design concept and, in particular, the design intent of the facades. With the exception of the barrel vaulted roof, the materials and colors that were approved at the time of preliminary review have not changed. Previously proposed to be copper, the barrel vaults are now clad with mill-finished aluminum.

Final Site and Building Plans:

At the submission of the preliminary site and building plans, the plans were significantly developed and, for all intents and purposes, representative of the final design of the exterior of the building. With the exception of the refinement of the Third Street entrance and the preparation of final landscape/streetscape plans, very little has changed from what the Commission previously approved. The Commission's approval of the preliminary site and building plans requested only that, in the preparation of final site and building plans, GSA and its design team (Graves/SHG):

- Continue to study ways to increase the identity of the Third Street entrance.
- Develop an exterior lighting plan, specifically the lighting of the Third Street entrance, and the consideration of lighting to emphasize the existing main entrance to the Courthouse.
- Continue to study the size and form of the proposed sculpture on the face of the vaults.
- Provide a model illustrating the building articulation, façade, fenestration and entrance treatments.

GSA and their design team's response to these requests is summarized below:

- ***Continue to study ways to increase the identity of the Third Street entrance.***

GSA and their design team have incorporated the following elements to highlight the identity of this entrance. Although the base of the annex is clad with stone to the 2nd floor slab, the stone on the two central courtset bays that flank the Third Street entrance extends to the 3rd floor slab. Signage identifying the building as the *E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse* appears at the top of this stone cladding. The three central entry bays are emphasized through the use of extensive glazing, revolving doors and a deep projecting canopy. Flagpoles flanking the canopy bring further attention to the entrance.

Various types of lighting are used to illuminate the courthouse along Third Street. Of the two types of bollards designed for the project, one is equipped with a light fixture. These illuminated bollards are located around the rotunda and at the lay-by directly in front of the entrance. Equally spaced single-head, Washington Globe streetlights are interrupted to call attention to the entry to the building. The projecting canopy is equipped with recessed lights to illuminate the sidewalk at the entry. Finally, the entry lobby has a heavily lighted ceiling and a decorative pendant fixture at the central entry bay.

Like the streetlights, the street trees are interrupted in front of the Third Street entrance. A distinct adjustment to the paving pattern adds one last gesture to mark this entrance to the annex. A lay-by is provided directly in front of the entry. Parking along Third Street is limited to 13 cars and designated as US Marshal Service only.



Rendering of the Third Street Entrance

Streetscape design incorporates the following:

<i>Street Lights:</i>	<i>Washington Globe Light Standard #16 Cast Iron Pole with satin Black painted finish Metal Halide Lamp</i>
<i>Illuminated Bollards:</i>	<i>12" dia. Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) finish Concrete-filled Steel Pipe Natural Limestone Grey Color to match building Nickel Silver Metalwork with satin finish High Pressure Sodium Lamp</i>
<i>Canopy Light:</i>	<i>7" dia. Recessed Light Fixtures (15 total)</i>
<i>Standard Bollards:</i>	<i>12" dia. Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) finish Concrete-filled Steel Pipe Natural Limestone Grey Color to match building Nickel Silver Metalwork with satin finish</i>
<i>Unit Paving:</i>	<i>24"x 36" Precast Concrete Pavers Natural Limestone Grey Color</i>
<i>Granite Pavers:</i>	<i>Salvaged from existing</i>
<i>Granite Curbs:</i>	<i>As per DC-DPW Standard</i>
<i>Brick Gutters:</i>	<i>As per DC-DPW Standard</i>
<i>Slate Pavers:</i>	<i>Natural Slate Color and finish to match existing Blend new material with existing</i>
<i>Portland Cement Concrete:</i>	<i>As per DC-DPW Standard To match existing concrete</i>
<i>Trees:</i>	<i>Scarlet Oak (Quercus Coccinea) 4" Caliper, 8' High Spaced at 37'-4" except for a 112' interruption at the building entrance</i>

While the architects have gone to great lengths to highlight the Third Street entrance, this entrance is understood as only one of three entries available to the public. This entrance provides a second primary access point that will serve to relieve traffic at the current main entrance on Constitution Avenue. As noted in the May 15, 2001 Historic Report:

It is the intent of the project that the south entrance of the existing courthouse remains the primary public entrance to the building. The retention and enhancement of the south plaza through removal of the access road will improve and reinforce the feasibility and importance of the south entrance.

All three entries are staffed with security personnel and outfitted with security equipment. Occupants of the building include US Courts employees, attorneys, defendants, witnesses and visitors arriving at various times throughout the day. Disabled access will be provided at both the Marshall Place and Third Street entrances. They are equal-distant from the Judiciary Square Metro station.

- ***Develop an exterior lighting plan, specifically the lighting of the Third Street entrance, and the consideration of lighting to emphasize the existing main entrance to the Courthouse.***

As noted above there are several sources of light both outside the building and within the Third Street entry lobby. The lighting scheme accents the entry portion of the façade.

It was decided to maintain the existing lighting at the main ceremonial south entrance to the Courthouse. Current lighting includes two decorative light pole fixtures to either side of the entry doors. The lobby remains lighted at night. Access to the courthouse, however, is restricted after 5:00 p.m. and visitors must use the Marshall Place entrance. Any additional lighting could mistakenly suggest that this building is open to the public after working hours and that there is after-hour access at this entrance.

- ***Continue to study the size and form of the proposed sculpture on the face of the vaults.***

The proposed sculpture is still being developed. The review of this element is proposed to be delegated to the Executive Director.

- ***Provide a model illustrating building articulation, façade, fenestration and entrance treatments.***

The Third Street elevation was rendered as a computer model to illustrate the entrance features. A 3-D CAD model has been prepared for Commission presentation.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTION

- On October 1, 1998, the National Capital Planning Commission approved the concept submission for the courthouse annex, specifically approving the proposed location and massing.
- At its meeting on April 8, 1999, the Commission approved the preliminary site and building plans for the annex, except for specific elements of the elevations, and requested that, in the further development of the preliminary building elevations, the General Services Administration and their design team restudy and refine these elements and submit revised building plans.
- At its meeting on June 3, 1999, the Commission approved the revised preliminary elevations.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on August 15, 2001 and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire Department; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

At its May 18, 2000 meeting, the Commission of Fine Arts approved final plans for the courthouse annex and restoration.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed courthouse annex and restoration is consistent with policies of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*.

Federal Capital Improvement Program

The courthouse annex is included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program, Fiscal Years, 1999-2003, adopted by the Commission at its meeting on July 9, 1998.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Development Plan

Under the 1974 Pennsylvania Avenue Development Plan, the site (Square 533) would continue to be designated for use as a federal courthouse.

Historic Preservation

GSA has determined that the proposed annex may have an adverse effect on the United States Courthouse, and has consulted with the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), as well as the staffs of the Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, since the inception of the project.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed among GSA, the DC SHPO, and the ACHP. The stipulations include GSA's commitment to construction of the annex and renovation of the courthouse in accordance with the recommended approaches set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, to further review of specified parts of the construction plans, and to adherence to the agreed-upon plans and specifications.

The courthouse, designed by architect Louis Justement, was constructed between 1949 and 1952. Not yet 50 years old, the building is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places but is considered by GSA to be eligible for listing. Clad in limestone with aluminum and granite trim, the building is an example of the stripped classicism so prevalent in Washington at mid-century—an architectural style for which Washington is the exemplar. The significant interior spaces, such as courtrooms, lobbies, the library, etc, are simple but elegant, with impressive finishes, as befits a courthouse of its era.

Justement sited the building's front façade to align with the Central Library Building, a once-adjacent structure subsequently demolished for the construction of the Canadian Embassy. The plan and materials of the plaza in front of the courthouse are original. Further, the parking lot on the east side of the site is considered by GSA to be a contributing element of the setting. The

projection of the annex beyond the front facade of the courthouse alters the relationship of the building to Constitution Avenue and the larger setting.

The adverse effect determination comes about through the alteration and enclosure of the east façade of the courthouse, the change to the setting, and the alteration and/or loss of portions of the interior plan and building fabric.

The staff commends GSA and its design team for their diligence and thoughtfulness throughout the design process in balancing the needs of the court with the retention of historic interior fabric. Most of the interior plans and finishes have remained intact through the intervening years, and most of the significant interior spaces and building fabric have also been retained. At the same time, the functions and public use of the courthouse have changed over time, as have security concerns for the interior as well as exterior of the building. Where loss or alteration of the plan or fabric are proposed to occur, GSA has consulted all the reviewing parties to seek avoidance of the loss or the best possible alternative in each instance. The courthouse and the annex will continue to serve the American public well into the future.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) GSA, has determined that the proposed U.S. Courthouse annex and renovation does not require an environmental impact statement. Instead, GSA has determined that the project qualifies as a categorical exclusion under its NEPA compliance procedures at GSA Order PBS 1095.4C and the GSA NEPA Compliance Guide. A checklist categorical review was conducted by GSA and concluded the action would adhere to all four conditions of the analysis, which require that:

- The structure and use are substantially in compliance with local planning and zoning;
- The proposal will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility;
- The site and scale of proposed development are consistent with existing and adjacent or nearby buildings; and
- There is no evidence of community controversy or other environmental issues.

The project would not generate major impacts on natural features or the local road network since most of the work would occur on built surfaces and no additional employees, visitors, and traffic would result. There will be a loss of approximately one-tenth of an acre of grass and shrubs. Major enhancement of the pedestrian area at the existing forecourt of the Courthouse is achieved in the proposed new site plan for the annex by creating a new green-space area adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue.